



A Shared Vision for the Scotchman Peaks

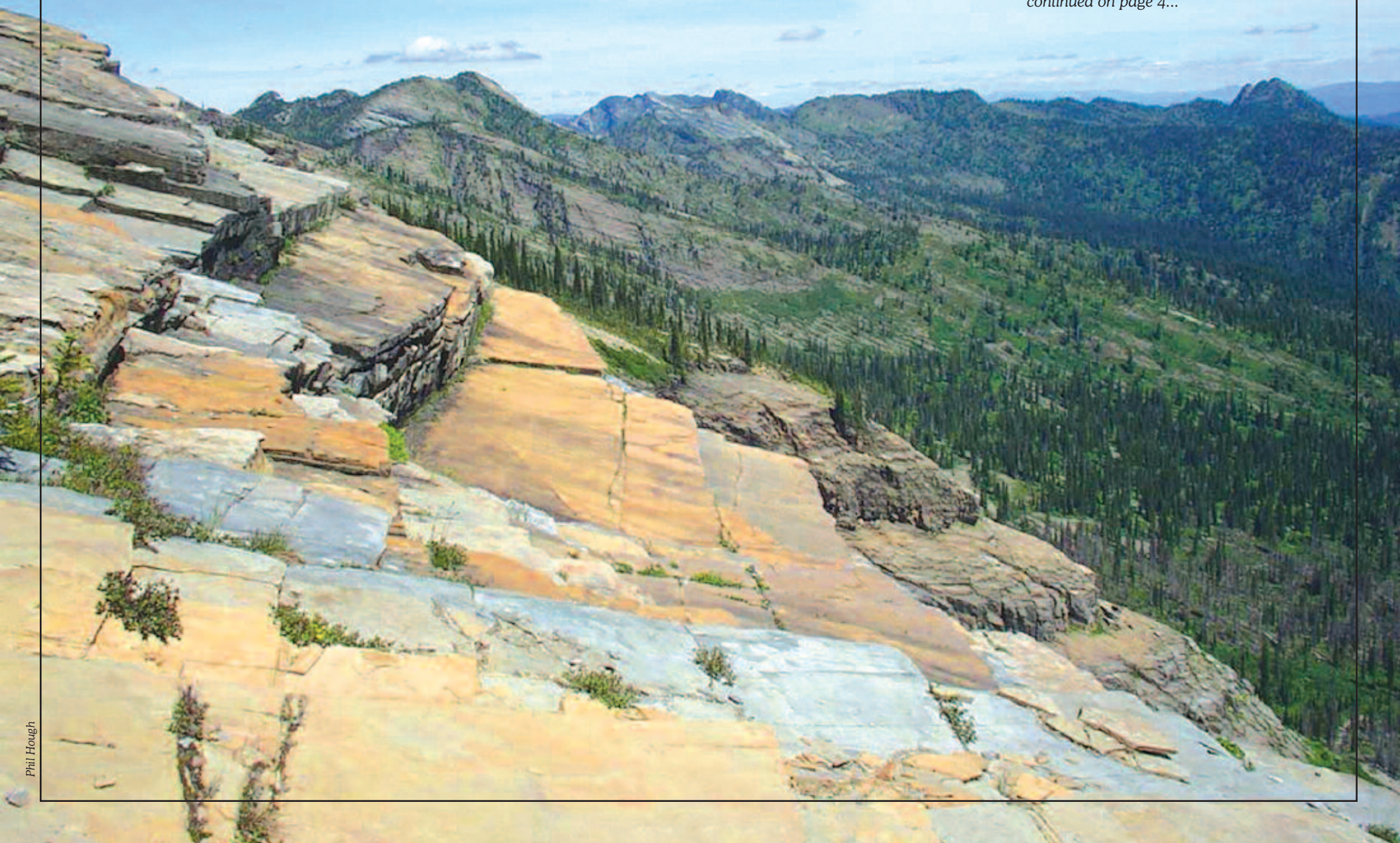
by Phil Hough

A WONDER IN THE WEST

WE WHO ARE FORTUNATE ENOUGH to live in northern Idaho and western Montana know that we inhabit a very special place. The Forest Service calls it the “Scotchman Peaks Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA).” But that dry, bureaucratic term is misleading. Much of the Scotchmans hasn’t truly been “inventoried” at all—it hasn’t been catalogued, defined, and entered as a line item on a list. Many of the tallest peaks don’t even have names. Most of the basins, passes or ponds

leave marks on a map but none on the lips. Sometimes locals agree on a common name so they know where to meet up. But they whisper these names, because we take away a little wilderness the first time we name something—and the people who live here know it. This area remains a wild place, not a series of line items in an inventory. And that is its beauty, its specialness, and its promise. It’s why the Scotchmans deserves to be protected, now and for all time.

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Phil Hough

Deploying New Skills, Going Back to Basics

By Joseph Scalia III
President, Montana
Wilderness Association



I am honored and excited to say Hello as the new President of Montana Wilderness Association. Our organization was born in 1958 in the spirit of such wilderness pioneers as Bob Marshall and Aldo Leopold, and we've been led along the way by such farsighted lovers of wilderness as Cecil Garland, Doris Milner and Tom "Hobnail" Edwards. MWA has epitomized and will always epitomize grassroots activism; we were instrumental in the passage of the 1964 Wilderness Act that protected 3.4 million acres of Montana wildlands "in perpetuity." We've accomplished a lot and are rightfully proud of our history. Yet there still exist in Montana today 6.4 million acres of unprotected wilderness, lands that face ever-growing encroachments on their wild character. These pristine but vulnerable landscapes are our inspiration, and our challenge.

In December we said a fond goodbye to Gerry Jennings as she closed her four-year term as President at our Annual Convention. Gerry's term saw many changes in MWA, including a revamped State Council, a new

Executive Director, and a restructured staff. Significantly, during those four years the organization grew in political savvy and in a sharper focus on the acquisition of permanent protection—Wilderness!—for our remaining roadless lands.

My wife, Lynne, and I came to Montana in 1980 and have spent our entire adult lives here. Our son, Joseph IV, was born and raised in Montana. We have always lived close to our wildlands, wondrous places that have defined and enriched us. These vast, quiet spaces, where we can still go to touch our roots and learn who we are—these spaces are a priceless gift to humanity and are our responsibility to protect.

MWA understands the need for humans and all other species, for wild lands and peopled lands, to exist harmoniously on the planet and in our state. We're seeking collaborative solutions that respect diverse interests in ways that are fair and equitable.

These vast, quiet spaces, where we can still go to touch our roots and learn who we are—these spaces are a priceless gift to humanity and are our responsibility to protect.

At the same time, we're moving intently toward the successful fruition of our Wilderness campaigns. We are very purposefully and strategically aiming at Wilderness legislation in the near future. The time for lamenting the "Wilderness Drought" has passed. Now is the time for making the organizational changes and creating the new attitudes that will end the drought. That goal is realizable, and near. We can almost feel it.

As we move towards Wilderness, grassroots work remains crucial not only to our identity, but to our success.

Member activists across the state are deeply engaged in wilderness campaigns, watching over and guarding lands not yet protected by the 1964 Wilderness Act. Our State Council is composed of grassroots folk, local activists who have volunteered their services to MWA's governing board. While we have changed with changing times, our identity and essence not only remain, but march forward!



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

And Aspens Change in the Fall...

by Tim Baker

You can choose to change or be changed. Either way, change is inevitable.

The Montana Wilderness Association is choosing to change, to better focus our resources on permanently protecting those special places that define Montana Wilderness!

The most recent changes in staff structure are the culmination of a process that began over five years ago—when the State Council first embarked on a serious path of introspection and a commitment to become a stronger force for Wilderness.

This look inward raised some hard questions, about our capacity and how we do our work to obtain new permanent protections for our favorite places. We realized that we needed to adapt to changing times to better accomplish our core mission.

These efforts have required countless hours from volunteers—including State Council leaders, chapter representatives, and other MWA members.

But that's nothing new. For nearly 50 years, thousands of grassroots volunteers have been the powerhouse of MWA—indeed, during the "golden age" of Wilderness in Montana (the 1960s and 70s), MWA volunteers did it all.

I'm proud of MWA's grassroots tradition, and was myself part of it for many years—as an active member, local chapter leader, and State Council member.

That strong grassroots tradition carries on! Our new structure will highlight our volunteer base and make it more effective by relying more on grassroots power and

focusing our staff resources where they will make the most difference, creating more opportunities for more success.

We're primarily focusing on three areas that currently offer the most promise for new Wilderness—the wild country of Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest, the magnificent Rocky Mountain Front, and the awe-inspiring Scotchman Peaks.

Our work to help local communities protect local landscapes will continue. Our chapter structure will continue to play a vital role, as wellsprings of volunteer energy, support, and community connection. The clear emphasis for our staff resources will be to permanently protect our special priority areas through new Wilderness designation.

Our staff is hard working and passionate about their work, and we are grateful for their commitment to wild Montana. These changes in structure affect everyone, and we are sad to lose valuable members of our team. A unanimous Council concluded that these changes are in the best interests of MWA and Montana's most special places.

I'm going to echo the comments offered by Joe Scalia, our new Council President (welcome!): the time for talking about the "Wilderness drought" is over—now it's time to end it!

The world changes, and to succeed, we must change too.

Opportunity knocks for the next golden age. Let's get after it—on to Wilderness!

Tim Baker is MWA's Executive Director



This letter was sent to Montana Wilderness Association members as an email message on November 30. We repeat it here for those members who didn't receive it. As MWA's President from 2002 to 2006, Gerry Jennings has been instrumental in the growth, reorganization, and great changes that MWA has been going through. She talks about the necessity for change, and how hard it can be—but the ways in which change can bring new hope and dedication, as well....

Dear fellow Montana Wilderness Association member:

It is with excitement and a measure of sadness that I bring you news of changes at Montana Wilderness Association.

Over the next few months, MWA will be restructuring our staff so that we are better able to conserve Montana's special places through local, grassroots efforts. Sadly, this means that our 48-year-old organization will close three field offices and reduce staff.

We are so grateful to our staff for their hard work and dedication for so many years. We are saddened to lose valuable members of our team. As you can imagine, the decision to close these offices was difficult, but one that we feel is in the best interest of our organization and Montana's wild places.

For more than 48 years, Montana Wilderness Association has engaged thousands of grassroots volunteers to protect Montana's special places. Together, we've helped preserve places like the Scapegoat, the Mission Mountains, the Absaroka-Beartooth and others.

Over the last few years, we have devoted extra resources to engaging members in the development of Forest Service plans, such as the Gallatin and Lewis and Clark National Forest travel plans. Frankly, we've been dipping into our bank account to do this. Now, the council has decided it's time to start building up our bank account again, instead of tapping it.

As these processes wind down, MWA is shifting its resources back to its core mission: protecting Montana's special places.

To that end, our Council voted unanimously to revise the organization's staff structure. Doing so will reduce our annual budget from \$1.1 million in 2006 to \$950,000 in 2007. Our full-time staff will go from 16 to 13 and field offices in Dillon, Billings, and Bozeman will close as of February.

What's the goal of this? Simple: Permanent protection for Montana's most treasured places, starting with the Rocky Mountain Front, the wild country of the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest, and Scotchman Peaks on the Kootenai. With the changes, we will continue to serve our members across the state and local chapters in Billings, Bozeman and elsewhere, because we fully understand that our members give us our strength and our best ideas.

Thanks to people like you, MWA remains one of the oldest, largest, and most effective conservation groups in Montana. We are respected for our common-sense approach and deep-seated love of Montana.

This weekend, we will celebrate our 48th anniversary with our annual convention in Butte. I hope you will join us as we come together to celebrate Montana's wild places and our shared commitment to protect them for future generations.

Together, we have accomplished great things for Montana. With your help, we will continue to do so.

Sincerely,

Gerry Jennings, Council President





MONTANA WILDERNESS ASSOCIATION

Protecting Montana's wilderness heritage, quiet beauty, and outdoor traditions, now and for future generations.

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UPDATES FROM THE FIELD

➤ ROCKY MOUNTAIN FRONT

STOPPING OIL AND GAS LEASING ON THE FRONT

It's time for a victory celebration on the Front. In December, legislation sponsored by Senator Max Baucus that will prevent all future oil and gas leasing on public lands on the Front passed Congress and was signed by the President. The legislation will help to protect the Front's magnificent hunting, wildlife, and scenic values. The ban on new leases will also allow non-profit groups to purchase existing leases and permanently retire them, without fear the federal government could reissue the leases in the future. It's a giant stride towards permanent protection of the Front's special, wild places.

The move to ban leases started as a bi-partisan effort, with legislation introduced by Senator Burns in June. In December, Senator Baucus picked up the ball and used his legislative experience and skill to guide the bill through the closing days of Congress.

Everyone who loves the Front owes the Senator a huge debt of gratitude for winning this victory for one of Montana's last best places.

RMF TRAVEL PLAN

The final draft for the Lewis and Clark National Forest Travel Plan (Rocky Mountain Front Division) is anticipated in mid-March 2007. Keep your fingers crossed for a great travel plan on the Front!

Lovers of the Front have worked countless hours to realize a travel plan that protects the forest's wild landscapes and recognizes the Front as one of America's unique wild resources. Conservationists have had numerous discussions, on-site inspections, and conferences with forest service personnel in Great Falls, in Choteau, and in the backcountry. MWA hopes this work will pay off in a travel plan that limits motorized use and that places the highest value on the unmatched scenery, wildlife habitat, and solitude of this magic place.

➤ BEAVERHEAD-DEERLODGE PARTNERSHIP

The Beaverhead-Deerlodge Partners are continuing to work together, talking with other groups and refining their proposal in response to constructive input. The Forest Service has agreed to consider the Partnership recommendations, and the agency will open an additional comment period this spring. Both are positive steps forward. Meantime, the Partners are discussing the details of a legislative package, including Wilderness.

➤ LEWIS & CLARK NATIONAL FOREST/JEFFERSON DIVISION

LITTLE BELT, CASTLE AND NORTH CRAZY MOUNTAINS TRAVEL PLAN

A final decision on the Little Belt, Castle and North Crazy Mountains Travel Plan may be issued in April. Across the state hikers, horse-back riders, floaters and skiers have expressed a need to protect areas the Smith River corridor and adjoining Tenderfoot Deep Creek roadless area, the Middle Fork of the Judith Wilderness Study Area, and Pilgrim Creek roadless area.

It appears the Lewis and Clark Forest will honor the winter use agreement between MWA, Great Falls Cross Country Club, Montana Snowmobile Association and two Central Montana snowmobile clubs. Most roadless areas will be motor-free, including most of the Middle Fork of the Judith Wilderness Study Area. Snowmobiles will not be allowed on cross-country ski trails in Deadman and Ranch Creeks, and Jefferson Creek will be designated for snowshoeing.

Spike Thompson, Supervisor of the Lewis and Clark Forest, supports the creation of at least one large motor-free block of land (80,000 acres) within the forest. In the Little Belts there are over 1,600 miles of roads and over 500 miles of motorized trails, but only 62 miles of quiet, motor-free trails. Use is equally unbalanced in the Castle and North Crazy mountains. MWA members advocate a plan which restores some balance.

➤ LOLO NATIONAL FOREST

FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Lolo draft plan was released in May and the comment period ended on September 7. The planning team is now analyzing the public comments, and will create "public concern statements" from the comments that will be reviewed by the leadership team. The final plan is expected in the spring.

➤ BITTERROOT NATIONAL FOREST

FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN

As with Lolo Forest, the Bitterroot draft plan was released in May and the comment period ended on September 7. The planning team is analyzing the public comments, and will create "public concern statements" that will be reviewed by the leadership team. The final plan is expected in the spring.

➤ CUSTER NATIONAL FOREST

TRAVEL PLAN

Five public meetings on the travel plan will take place from January through March in Billings. The goal is to determine if common ground can be found regarding the designation of motorized and non-motorized routes. The meetings are a welcome opportunity for wilderness advocates and motorized users to speak to each other.

The travel plan must be completed by late 2008. The anticipated release of the Record of Decision (ROD) and final Travel Management Plan is autumn 2008. *Note: The revision covers one of three districts in the forest, the Beartooth District, which includes the Beartooth Front and is the core of the Pryor Mountain ecosystem.*

➤ GALLATIN NATIONAL FOREST

TRAVEL PLAN

The Gallatin National Forest has released its Final Travel Plan and Record of Decision after four long years. See article on page 8.

➤ KOOTENAI NATIONAL FOREST

FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN

The final plans for the Panhandle and Kootenai forests will be released at the earliest in June, after which the "objection period" (a final public review) begins. It is expected that the two forest supervisors and the district rangers involved in the Scotchmans Wilderness Proposal will meet in January or February to discuss areas of common interest.

➤ FLATHEAD NATIONAL FOREST

FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN

A final record of decision was signed for the Flathead Forest Plan winter travel amendment November 17, 2006. The decision follows the signed agreement between MWA members, Flathead and Cutbank snowmobile clubs, and the Montana Snowmobile Association.

The amendment protects over 90% of the Flathead side of the Winton Wedemeyer Wilderness as motorfree, as well as the Swan Front Addition to the Bob Marshall, the Greater Jewel Basin proposed Wilderness, and Additions to the Great Bear Wilderness in the upper Middle fork.

The settlement did NOT include an agreement for late season (post den emergence) snowmobiling in grizzly habitat.

➤ UPPER MISSOURI BREAKS NATIONAL MONUMENT

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN (RMP)

The BLM is not expected issue a final decision for the Upper Missouri Breaks Monument until September 2007. Discussions point to a management plan similar to the preferred draft. An unprecedented six recreational airstrips (in a national monument) may be proposed, three of them in the Bullwhacker, described as containing "some of the wildest country on all the Great Plains."

Wildlife security will improve somewhat under the new plan, but for the rest of the year the high density of two-tracks will probably remain in place.

The new plan will be a step backward for river use. Under the draft plan, the BLM proposed a 57-mile long seasonal closure, from June to mid-September, to all motorized watercraft. Now, despite overwhelming public support for a non-motorized river, the agency is proposing to reduce the seasonal closure by 10 days and to restrict motorized watercraft only from Sunday to Wednesday during seasonal closure. It is unclear as to what degree the values for which the Monument was created will be honored.

➤ ROADLESS RULE

On September 20, 2006, a U.S. District Court in California held that the Bush administration violated the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Endangered Species Act (ESA) in repealing the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule. Further, the court ruled that adoption of the state-by-state petition process as a substitute for the national rule was illegal.

This decision leaves the 2001 Roadless Conservation Rule as the law of the land, and places restrictions on most road building and timber cutting within Inventoried Roadless Areas on national forest land.

It is unclear how the administration will respond to the court's ruling. However, the administration's 2005 state-by-state roadless petition rule has been invalidated, and there are no longer any pending deadlines requiring immediate action by state governors.

Governor Schweitzer has stated his commitment to protecting the backcountry values of Montana's 6.4 million acres of roadless lands. We commend the Governor for his strong support for Montana's outdoor traditions and wild backcountry.

FLORENCE BALDWIN, 1911-2007

Florence Baldwin passed away on January 6 at the age of 95. With her husband Ken, Florence was one of the founders of Montana Wilderness Association in 1958. All of us who cherish Montana's wild places owe her an enormous debt. For those who knew Florence, it was impossible to think of her without Ken. They were married for

more than 75 years, and one was as staunch in defense of Wilderness as the other. With Ken, we grieve for her and will miss her. But the next time you are hiking along a high Wilderness trail, and you feel a presence over your shoulder—turn around. It may be Florence, smiling down at you, glad you're enjoying the wild places she fought for.

A WONDER IN THE WEST

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DURING OUR 2004 HIKE

of the Pacific Crest Trail, Deb and I encountered the best and worst of what wilderness offers. In the High Sierras we walked for over 200 miles without ever crossing a road. We endured three weeks of steady September rains in Washington, helping us to forget the days in southern California where 100-degree temperatures and 20 miles between water sources were the norm. But we met our “wildest” wilderness last summer when we bushwhacked for four days along the rugged spine of the Scotchman Peaks on the Montana/Idaho divide. Our last night of the trip brought us the kind of intense summer rains this area of basins and divides seems to specialize in. There was no avoiding the wet. We slept a damp, fitful sleep, rain slowly filling the swale surrounding our tent. We awoke in a large pool of cold water. Good morning!



Summer or winter, the Scotchmans is a land of magic.

Phil Hough

bear, bull trout, lynx, and wolf. The Scotchmans is home to sensitive species such as mountain goat and wolverine. Big game abounds—trophy elk and mule deer are common; magnificent moose and black bear are found in the Scotchmans' hidden glens.

A COMMON PAST, A NEW FUTURE

Our region's communities share an economic past that was based on the traditional extractive industries of timbering and mining. We also share an awareness that change is coming, and that there is a new economic reality. The people of the Scotchmans region are developing a New West economy where people and business thrive on the “quality of life” and on the health of our wildlands.

We can look back to forest plans that produced hundreds of millions of board feet a year in timber sales, recognizing the vitality and energy of that era—but knowing those days are past. And we are all awaiting the Kootenai and Panhandle forest plan revisions due out this spring that will guide the future of the Scotchmans. Lovers of this landscape share a responsibility to encourage the Forest Service to recommend Wilderness both for a healthy environment and for a healthy economy for the people of the area.

A recent study by the Sonoran Institute concluded that counties in the West with Designated Wilderness have the greatest economic vitality. Wilderness attracts people who telecommute, who relocate independent businesses, who are looking for retirement or second homes. Such immigrants bring high levels of personal and investment income to

KEEPING THE HEART

The heart and soul of the Scotchman Peaks is this high, unnamed ridge, a rugged watershed divide. It creates unique microclimates, separating dry slope Ponderosa from interior rain forest. This divide is so prominent that the Idaho Panhandle and Kootenai forests ignore the north/south state line and use the divide to define their forest boundaries. The ruggedness of the Scotchmans compels the two forests to share each state. This same ruggedness is bringing together communities from both states to share in a vision for this wild landscape.

These 88,000 acres of rugged backcountry remain pristine because they have been largely forgotten—unnamed, tucked out of sight and out of mind, just beyond the reach of our speech and our development. What timber and minerals exist are hard enough to get to that they're not economically attractive. But as our society grows it continues its desire

to develop and “own” the last unnamed, untamed places. So concerned citizens from both sides of the border have come together in the last two years in a shared vision for the Scotchmans—a vision to protect this area as Designated Wilderness.

The Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness group was born of this shared vision. We envision a Scotchmans that remains “untrammelled” by humankind.

Access to the Scotchmans' interior is made difficult by imposing mountain slopes, as well as by rock and alder choked creeks. Yet the Scotchmans holds more than mere “high elevation rock and ice.” These steep divides are separated by high basins and deep valleys, producing great wellsprings of biological diversity, harboring numerous and varied habitats. As a vital link in the Yukon to Yellowstone Corridor, the Scotchmans provides special habitat for a number of “threatened and endangered” species including grizzly

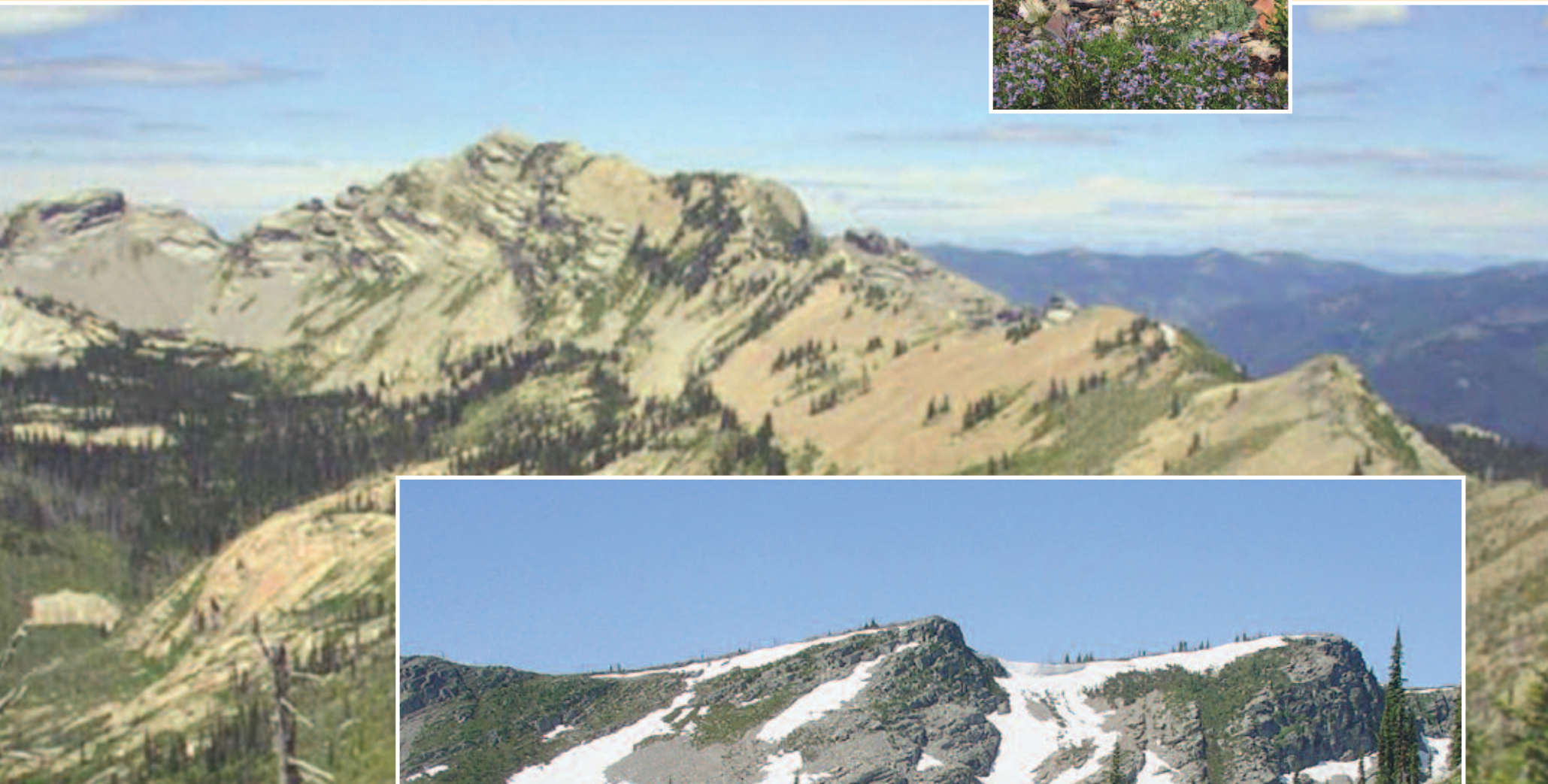


The high peaks of the Scotchmans provide crucial habitat for newborn mountain goats.

To venture into the Scotchmans is to step back into time, to experience the ancient American continent.



Phil Hough



Phil Hough

the area's economy. This leads to an increase in high-paying professional jobs in such fields as architecture, finance, business support and medical services.

Our surrounding communities will share in the benefits of this economic development as well as in the increased tourism which Wilderness Designation brings. But change has its bumps and detours, and it's sometimes hard to recognize the benefits when change is occurring. We need to educate ourselves and our communities about the value of Wilderness as a vital component of a balanced strategy for managing our public lands.

CARRYING THE MESSAGE

Friends of Scotchman Peaks has spent the last two years sharing our vision for protecting this special place, reaching out to residents and talking about the benefits of Wilderness to our communities. We haven't been working alone—we share this vision with groups such as the Idaho Conservation League and the Montana Wilderness Association, who fully support Wilderness Designation for the Scotchman Peaks. Perhaps most significantly, average citizens and mainstream organizations in our communities also share the vision. The *Sanders County Ledger*, the Thompson Falls City Council, *The River Journal*, the *Bonner County Daily Bee*, the Greater Sandpoint Chamber of Commerce and the Bonner County Commissioners have all voiced their support for Wilderness Designation for the Scotchmans. And as I write this we are about to achieve a big milestone—our list of friends and supporters will soon top 1,000!

Benton Mackaye, a founding member of the Wilderness Society and the "father" of the Appalachian Trail, once said that the purpose of that path was "To walk; to see and to really see what you see." It seems simple and undeniable—the idea that a walk in Wilderness can open our eyes more widely and allow us to see, to achieve a clearer vision. Wilderness brings clarity to our minds and to our senses. This clarity of vision, this refining of perception and understanding, is why Deb and I go on long hikes, why we go to the Wilderness, why we go to the Scotchmans—to really see. That's why we share this dream of protecting the Scotchmans

with Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness, Montana Wilderness Association and others. We hope you will join us in our vision of Wilderness for the Scotchman Peaks!

Phil Hough is Chair of Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness. Deb has walked many miles along the trails of life with him.

Hiking opportunities abound in the Scotchmans, an area renowned for its variety and changing landscapes.

IMPORTANT WORK REMAINS TO BE DONE.

We invite you to share in our vision, and to support our efforts at bringing Wilderness Designation to the Scotchmans. Please visit our website at www.scotchmanpeaks.org to sign up as a "friend" and to see how you can help!



FROM BUTTE, AND PROUD OF IT...

A HOMEBOY VIEWS THE CONVENTION

by Walter Walsh

LOVE BUTTE, WILDERNESS, AND MONTANA—not necessarily in that order, but with great dedication and affection for all three. So when I found that the convention for my favorite subject—Wilderness—was going to be in my favorite town—Butte—with my favorite people—MWA members—in December of 2006, well, I thought, the stars are shining upon us. This will be a good year for Montana wildlands...

I left Helena and arrived in the Promised Land early Friday afternoon. As I strolled through the Copper King lobby, I saw many familiar faces and several new ones. I was glad to see people I had never met, and I anticipated that the convention would be well attended.

The convention kicked off on Friday with the "Wilderness Advocate Training" seminar, hosted by Doug Scott, renowned Wilderness advocate, and Jen Schmidt, both of the Campaign for America's Wilderness. Doug went around the room and asked everyone how many state conventions he or she had attended, and several had been to the convention numerous times—one gentleman had missed only one out of 48! Now that's dedication! I liked how Doug included the first-time attendees—it made them feel welcomed to our wonderful organization. Doug made me realize that new members are needed in MWA for many reasons, and not just for their dues. He emphasized that every organization needs fresh blood and updated ideas, and new members provide MWA with a revitalizing burst of energy.

Doug Scott is always a pleasure to listen to, and his optimism is exciting and contagious. He believes, as I do, that MWA is on the verge of getting new Wilderness. He made it clear that "Practical Idealism" is the key to our success. Ideals are important, but idealism must be made to work to in the practical world.

Doug's talk was a multi-media presentation, making it even more interesting and educational. The slides I really liked were the two that illustrated the

"myth of the clean Wilderness bill." The first slide showed a Wilderness bill from 1964 that fit onto one sheet of paper, and the second showed a recent Wilderness bill that had to be a foot thick. Doug explained that unlike 1964, these days we are dealing with harder turf where many parties have an interest in using the land. All those issues have to be addressed in the final bill, and it can be long and complex. But that's the reality we have to deal with, to reach Wilderness.

The very day the convention started, December 2, a law was passed by Congress that designated Wilderness

in several states—and Utah was one of them. Of all the 50 states, I would have guessed that the last one to pass a Wilderness bill would be Utah. It drove home to me that if Utah can do it, then Montana can too! If we keep demanding perfection, we will never get anything. Accommodation and compromise is the new model, and that is exactly what MWA is doing. MWA has created a new paradigm of accommodation and compromise,

which is reflected in the Beaverhead-Deerlodge Agreement. For me, the bottom line of Doug's message was to keep your ideals but marry them to a practical appreciation of how the world really works.

We were welcomed to Butte by Charlie O'Leary, Chair of the Butte-Silver Bow Board of Commissioners. Charlie told a humorous story about his dog that made everyone laugh. It was one of those typical "40 below in Butte!" tales, and it had to do with the problem a dog can have in the cold when the call of nature strikes.... Well, maybe you



Great speakers, exciting entertainment—we had a good time and learned a lot!

had to be there. But we all chuckled. Charlie said that his goal is to accomplish Wilderness protection for Montana wildlands. I was very pleased to hear this.

BUTTE, AMERICA WANTS WILDERNESS TOO

Saturday morning, Art Noonan, a Montana State Representative from Butte, gave the introduction, and he emphasized how much local people in the Mining City have a sense of place. Butte folks want jobs, but they also fish, hunt and hike. And like his fellow townsman Charlie, Art said that he supports Wilderness. Butte cares about its wildlands!

Next on board, Gerry Jennings reflected on her four-year term as MWA's President. I have always admired Gerry's energy and enthusiasm, and among her many successes as President, I feel that her greatest has been directing MWA through the "sea change" that the organization has undergone. Our new direction will embrace and implement this policy of collaborative effort.

Executive Director Tim Baker talked about new paths to Wilderness, and I enjoyed his presentation. It's reassuring to know that MWA is in good hands with a passionate and intelligent person like Tim, and I see him leading us to new Wilderness in Montana.

The Beaverhead-Deerlodge Panel that emphasized building partnerships between non-traditional parties was great, too. Listening to Sherm

Anderson, who owns and manages

Sun Mountain Lumber in Deerlodge, was a definite highlight of the convention. Sherm said he realized that Wilderness and timber advocates were both being squeezed out of the forests by motorized recreation. Sherm was instrumental in creating the partnership with MWA that has led to the "B-D" Agreement, and he emphasized that it was an ongoing, evolving partnership. This is a perfect example of the practical idealism that Doug Scott described.

THE BEST OF THE OLD AND THE NEW

My favorite speaker had to be Pat "Yoda" Williams, a 9-term congressman for Montana—from Butte. Pat talked about the concept of "restoration economy." He said that environmentalists and those with skills in extraction should find common ground. (Practical idealism, again). Using the work skills of yesterday and tomorrow, we can come together to forge a new, restoration-based economy, he told us. Having grown up in Butte, I know that the people love its heritage, and that the Richest Hill on Earth can demonstrate to the rest of the country how community revitalization can create a restoration ethic. A good example of habitat restoration is Silver Bow Creek. A once-toxic stream, a four and a half inch brook



Pat Williams believes a "restoration economy" is the way to protect our wildlands and assure prosperity for his hometown of Butte.



Speaker Joel Connelly agrees with Kendall Flint that "partnership" is the way forward.

trout was recently discovered swimming in it. When I was growing up, this would have been unthinkable. What a shining example this makes for every place in the West where there is a toxic backlog that needs to be cleaned up.

I missed the keynote speaker—I was napping at a friend's house—I had been out late the previous night. (Butte is a party town.) I heard he was very good, though.

Huzzah for the Volunteers! An event as large as a state convention can't happen without a lot of volunteer help, and this year's convention in Butte was no exception. More than 30 MWA volunteers contributed hundreds of hours to our Wilderness Gathering. Some live in Butte—some drove from Helena and Bozeman and as far away as Billings and Missoula. Their work started long before the convention and went on to the very last moments. They helped in the planning and preparation. In Butte, they manned the registration desk, sold t-shirts and caps, set up all the silent



auction items, arranged tables and chairs, and much more. And afterwards, when everyone else had gone home, they packed things up and saved posters and racks and signs...for our next convention. It was a labor of love, but it was—a labor. But they did it all with good cheer and with smiling faces because, after all, it was for Wilderness. That thing we all love and long for. There are too many folks to name individually here. But we want to give thanks. So here's one grand huzzah for the volunteers—the folks who came, who worked so hard, and who made the convention a huge success. Thanks.

GIVE MONTANA WILDERNESS TODAY – AND FOREVER!

Give the gift that goes on giving—Wilderness. By giving the gift of Wilderness to those we care about today, we also pass Wilderness on to future generations...

Gift memberships are a great way to give something special to your friends and family—and to introduce them to the Montana Wilderness Association at the same time.

For only \$30 each you can support the Montana Wilderness Association, increase our membership, and show your friends and family that you love Montana's Wilderness.

Like all members, recipients of gift memberships will receive everything they need to become a Wilderness champion. We'll send them our annual Wilderness Walks schedules, quarterly newsletters, and timely action-alerts to help them become voices for Montana's wilderness.

To give gift memberships, clip out this form, and send it with your check or credit card information to:

Montana Wilderness Association
30 S. Ewing, Helena, MT 59601

You can also give gift memberships online. Go to www.wildmontana.org, look for "Support our Work," and click to "Join or Renew." It's quick and easy!

YES, I WANT TO GIVE MONTANA WILDERNESS!

My name is _____

I'd like to give a gift membership to the following people:

Recipient 1: _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Recipient 2: _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Recipient 3: _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

(To give more than three memberships, use a separate piece of paper for additional names and addresses.)

My payment is for _____ memberships @ \$30 per membership. Total \$ _____

___ Check enclosed, payable to Montana Wilderness Association

___ Please charge my credit card

Card # _____

Exp. Date _____

Name on Card _____

Thank you. Your support will be rewarded with the protection of Montana Wilderness.

AND THE WINNERS ARE...

BRASS LANTERN AWARD

Each year Montana Wilderness Association honors members, friends and supporters who have given exceptional service to Wilderness by presenting them with the Brass Lantern Award. The recipients are persons who have taken action that promotes Wilderness, quiet trails, and the responsible management of our public lands.

The 2006 winners are:

- ✦ **Margaret Webster**, Billings
- ✦ **Steve Thompson**, Whitefish
- ✦ **Cathy Lewis**, Great Falls
- ✦ **Dick Young**, Bozeman
- ✦ **Paul Olson**, Wise River
- ✦ **Maggie Pitman**, Missoula

FOUNDER'S AWARD

One additional award is announced at the convention—the Founder's Award. This award is given to the member who best exemplifies outstanding dedication to the cause of Wilderness and the mission of Montana Wilderness Association. This year the Founder's Award was presented to a person whom Tim Baker described in his introductory speech as:

A person "of vision, and of patience, leadership, and perseverance..."

A person who continually demonstrates "magic in her work..."

A person whose "internal compass and strength have served MWA well..."

A person who "has a way of lifting you up, of welcoming you into her circle and giving you strength, and then turning you back out to face the world."

That person, of course, is MWA's President for the past four eventful, action-filled, always-changing years—**Gerry Jennings**. The award caught Gerry by surprise—as she said herself, it's hard to outfox a fox, but the awards committee had done it. She hadn't suspected she would receive the award and hadn't seen it coming. As Gerry took the award from Tim the stage was flooded with the Jennings family, husband Chuck and children and grandchildren. And there was a lot of digital picture-taking—a great deal of digital picture-taking. It was a grand moment that brought a great evening to its close.

Congratulations to all our winners. Thank you for your love of and great work for Wilderness.



Outgoing President Gerry Jennings receives the Founders Award "ice ax" from Executive Director Tim Baker.

WRAPPIN' IT UP AND DANCIN', SATURDAY NIGHT

The silent auction was, well, okay. The number of items up for bid was down from last year, but all the items were of good quality and all were bid on. The live auction was entertaining as always. It was delightful to see people have fun and pony up for a good cause. The huckleberry pie that traditionally is auctioned off was a smash hit. Someday I'll get a taste!



Incoming President Joe Scalia sees Wilderness on the horizon.

The closing banquet offered tasty victuals and it was fun to socialize with friends while dining. The annual awards were presented during dinner, and Gerry Jennings received the prestigious Founders Award, the highest accolade MWA can offer. Tim Baker presented the award after a long introduction that cleverly disguised that Gerry was the recipient—boy was she surprised that she had won! I didn't think we could keep it a secret from Gerry, but we did! She deserved it one hundred percent.

After the banquet, yours truly led a large contingent uptown to the historic M&M Bar, a Butte landmark. Several convention-goers had never been there but had heard great things about it. They were not disappointed! After taking in the M&M, we all walked down to the Silver Dollar Saloon for a fun night of dancing. Everyone should see Lex Hames and Norane Freistadt, two MWA staff members, cut a rug! They were awesome. Everyone had a great time, and they were all impressed with the nightlife that Butte has to offer.

I don't recall much about the Council meeting held on Sunday morning. I believe there was orange juice, but no aspirin. Overall, it was an outstanding convention. Attendance was good—over 250 people. Butte knows how to do things right, and all the comments I heard were favorable. Things ran smoothly and on time, and I didn't hear a single complaint. I look forward to the next convention! Though of course, it won't be in the Promised Land....

Walter Walsh, ESQ. is a member of MWA's State Council as the Representative for the Wild Divide Chapter.

Convention photos by Ellen Jennings.

THE GALLATIN'S FATE:

BLUE SMOKE IN THE HIGH COUNTRY?

by Noreen Breeding

THE FINAL DECISION on the Gallatin National Forest Travel Management Plan was released to the public on December 8 after four years and three public comment periods on three different sets of alternatives. Over those four years, Madison Gallatin Chapter members had waded through piles of paper and written specific recommendations in response to each proposal. We had high hopes for favorable results for roadless lands from one of the most ambitious, open, and inclusive planning processes we had ever participated in.

The Gallatin National Forest borders Yellowstone National Park to the north. It encompasses some of the nation's most wild and spectacular terrain in the Crazy Mountains, the Bridger Range, the Absarokas, the Beartooths, the Gallatin Range, and the Madison Range. Out of its 1.8 million acres, 716,000 are protected in the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness and the Lee Metcalf Wilderness; 704,000 acres are inventoried roadless; 155,000 acres belong to the Hyalite-Porcupine-Buffalo Horn Wilderness Study Area (HPBH WSA); and 225,000 acres are heavily roaded.

MORE BOOTS THAN MOTORS

Gallatin National Forest is the most heavily used forest in Montana and among the most heavily used in the nation. Currently, the predominant use is recreation, from traditional pursuits like hiking, camping, fishing and hunting, to growing motorized activity by off-road vehicles. It's this rapidly expanding motorized use—or conservationists would say, abuse—of the forest that the Travel Plan must address. The plan is, surprisingly, the first attempt by the agency to manage "travel" in the Gallatin. Over the years, motorized and mountain bike use has increased dramatically without direction and with very little management, causing many user conflicts and major resource damage. Nevertheless, Forest Service surveys and studies show that non-motorized activities exceed motorized activities by ten to one and that the largest future demand will be for non-motorized opportunities. The plan needs to speak to the fact that the vast majority of users are on foot or on horseback, and not pander to the loud, often shrill demands of the motor crowd.



The Lionhead Recommended Wilderness is a crucial travel corridor for grizzly bears coming and going from Yellowstone.

Public response reinforces this fact. During the last comment period, on the Draft EIS, 10,500 comments were submitted and 98% opposed motorized use. Out of 1,025 specific comments on the WSA, only 62 (6%) favored motorized use, with similar results across the forest.

Led by MWA field organizer Alex Phillips, MWA and the Madison-Gallatin Chapter partnered with The Wilderness Society, Greater Yellowstone Coalition, and other local groups to form Friends of the Gallatin Forest. The "Friends" shared resources to analyze the Travel Plan proposals and to reach out to mountain bike and horse groups. We held meetings in Bozeman, Livingston and Billings to inform MWA members of the plan. Four areas of the forest were selected as top priority: the HPBH WSA, the Crazies, the roadless west side of the Bridger Range, and the Lionhead Recommended Wilderness.

SOME GOOD THINGS... SOME BAD

The Travel Management Plan is complicated and difficult to understand without a lot of study. The forest was divided into 39 travel planning areas. Each area has been assigned specific goals and objectives to guide future use, and every one of the hundreds of trails and roads has been assigned specific prescriptions describing nine different types of use. For example, the prescription for the middle third of the Gallatin Crest trail #96 emphasizes motorcycle use from July 15 to September 5; prohibits ATVs and 4x4s; emphasizes mountain bikes, horseback riding, and hiking all year long; and allows snowmobiles and cross-country skiing and snowshoeing year round. The volume listing this information for the forest's hundreds of trails and roads is an inch thick.

The "mechanics" of travel management, however, have generally been well thought out by the Forest Service. Goals are clear and specific; motor vehicles are defined in order to deal with future technology; trail prescriptions are binding and motorized

use cannot be increased without NEPA clearance; and enforcement is guided by travel management maps rather than signs on the ground, which can disappear or be defaced. Gallatin National Forest personnel met several times with Crow tribal members for whom the entire Crazy mountain range is sacred. During

the summer, motorized routes in the main section of the Crazies will be limited to a single high mountain lake and lower peripheral routes, plus a few routes in the roaded northern side. The Lionhead Recommended Wilderness will be managed as motor-free and, in the near future, as bicycle-free. The agency has finally understood that non-motorized users want separation from motor vehicles and that cross-country ski opportunities are inadequate.

However, on the whole, the final Travel Management Plan is a disappointment. Becki Heath, the forest supervisor, retreated to a philosophy of "greater management control" of motor vehicles rather than limits on the amount of route miles. Trail miles withdrawn from ATV and motorcycle use are, sadly, made up for with more road miles.

The treatment of the HPBH WSA is especially of concern to conservationists and wilderness advocates. It is telling that the WSA was not defined as a single travel management area. Instead, it was divided into three different areas, and the WSA boundary wasn't even shown on maps until the public protested. Wilderness character is neglected in favor of an interpretation allowing continued, unlimited motorized use. As a result, one of the jewels of the Gallatin Range and an area that was mandated, by law, to be managed as potential wilderness is threatened with heavy motorized encroachment.

Anticipating a prompt decision on wilderness designation, the 1977 law creating the WSA allowed existing travel uses to continue only so long as wilderness character was maintained. The Gallatin's final Travel Management Plan flies in the face of this congressional directive, perpetuating motorized use and adding mountain bikes, which were almost unknown in 1977. The bikes and motorcycles can traverse the entire length of the WSA, running the very crest of the range most of the way. The snowmobile play area originally located at the southwest end of the WSA has been moved north (to avoid a grizzly bear recovery area), and enlarged, so the "play zone" now crosses the crest of the range for the first time, and can be accessed from both the Gallatin and Yellowstone river valleys. This is an open invitation to motorized abuse of this pristine area.

Outside of wilderness areas, there are very few

trails for hikers and horse riders free from bicycle and motorcycle traffic, and many of these are located in side drainages with restricted access. Motorcycle and mountain bike use are allowed to continue on the most popular trails in the west Bridgers and the WSA near Bozeman. A timeshare arrangement for alternating use between non-motorized and motorized/ bicycle groups has been proposed, but it remains to be seen if this is a workable, practical solution.

Mountain bikes are allowed to travel cross country and can even use two trails in the WSA from which motor vehicles have always been prohibited. A special area for snowmobile high marking has been set aside in the Crazies. In a surprise reversal of the draft proposal, requests for backcountry airstrips in eight areas will be considered, even though these areas can be reached by motor vehicle or by foot in a day and several are on the boundary of Yellowstone National Park.

Once again politics has trumped law, common sense, and public sentiment by allowing excessive motorized use of our forest trails. We are grateful to finally have some kind of management of motorized travel and we celebrate the protection of the Lionhead. But it isn't enough, and the Gallatin Forest deserves better. Friends of the Gallatin and other conservation groups are carefully preparing appeals to these decisions that fail to protect the Hyalite-Porcupine-Buffalo Horn WSA and other wild roadless lands.

Noreen Breeding is a member of MWA's State Council as the Representative for the Madison-Gallatin Chapter.

